

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
16 May 1979ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 2SECRET
CIA TurkeyMonitoring SALT II Compliance

Fears About U.S. Flights Turkey Tries to Assuage

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Premier Bulent Ecevit says that flights of U.S. spy planes within Turkish airspace to verify Soviet compliance with the SALT II treaty would not violate Soviet sovereignty.

Briefing his Republican People's Party on the U.S. request to fly high altitude planes over Turkey to monitor nuclear test areas of the neighboring Soviet Union, Ecevit yesterday said such missions would not be like "past controversial flights of spy planes over Soviet territory."

The premier said Americans approached Turkey for permission to conduct the flights when it was determined that surveillance of Soviet nuclear activity by satellites or land bases would not provide adequate and effective verification of compliance.

ECEVIT SAID HE was told gaps in monitoring Soviet nuclear tests, caused by the loss of observing stations in Iran, could only be bridged by specially-equipped planes flying over Turkey, but without entering Soviet airspace.

But he told parliamentarians that Turkey is neither a party to the SALT treaty nor has been apprised of its full text and could not reach a decision on permission before the Soviet Union and the United States finalized the SALT II pact.

This amounted to confirmation of an Foreign Ministry announcement that Soviet approval for the overflights would be Turkey's primary condition for approving them.

The ministry announced Monday that the United States had requested permission to make the flights, and a Turkish newspaper reported the subject was a predominant one in last week's visit by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Ecevit said the fact the flights would be strictly over Turkey would make them different from past operations of U-2 spy planes that flew over the Soviet Union.

IN WASHINGTON, Christopher said the report that Turkey insists on Moscow's approval before allowing U.S. spy planes to operate is "not correct." But Christopher, just back from talks with Turkish leaders, declined to go beyond that general denial when pressed for specifics.

Christopher repeatedly begged off when members of a House subcommittee considering aid to Turkey asked him what information he had that would contravene the impression left by the published report.

"I have indicated the story is not correct," he said. "But I must ask that we not start down the road, in open session, on intelligence matters."